



# NEWS & REPORTS

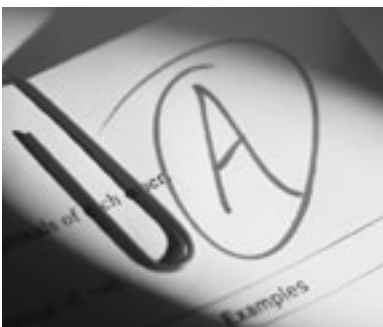
[www.sde.state.id.us/dept/](http://www.sde.state.id.us/dept/)

## Inside this issue



### Global connections

A team of Idaho educators visited the state's largest trading partner, China, this spring. See story on Page 7.



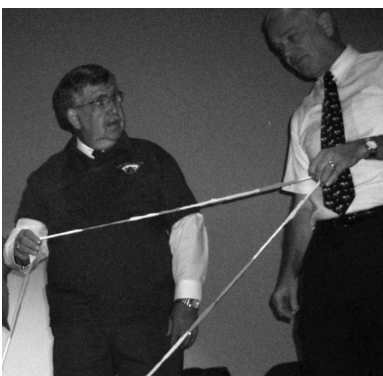
### Standards & testing

The state's standards are newly revised and were used to update the ISAT. See story on Page 3.



### High school reform

The plan to revise math and science will be further developed in 2006-07. See story on Page 3.



### Math

Idaho teachers cover all the angles at the middle school math academy. See story on Page 2.

### National honors

Gooding Elementary School has earned a national nutritional award. See story on Page 6.

## Public schools see first billion dollar state budget in 2006-07

After five years of relatively flat state budgets for salaries and operations, the Idaho Legislature approved a budget that provided a 3 percent increase in base salaries and classroom support.

Those increases, along with funding for an expected growth in students and maintaining other state programs, brought the state general funds support to more than \$1.04 billion for the first time. K-12

education's share of the total state budget, however, dropped to 44 percent from 45 percent.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard praised lawmakers' efforts, noting that the final budget exceeded her request for salaries by raising the base 3 percent and increasing the minimum teacher salary to \$30,000.

"I am encouraged to see an increase in state support," Howard said. "It does not

restore ground lost during the past five years, but it does create some forward momentum."

The Idaho School Boards Association, the Idaho Association of School Administrators, the Idaho Parent Teacher Association, and the State Department of Education encouraged schools to recognize the state commitment on "Thanks a Billion Day," May 1.

### Base salary increase

Local school boards determine the amount of salaries for their employees using state and other funds. For the first time in five years, the Legislature approved a 3% increase in the bases used to calculate the salary funds provided districts. The base amounts are:

Instructional – \$23,906  
Administrative – \$34,773  
Classified – \$19,207

## SPECIAL REPORT

# Aiming to improve

## A closer look at support for schools with struggling learners



A team including representatives from the State Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and the Boise School District, met with School Support Team member Janis Hull and Les Bois Junior High School Principal Coby Dennis and Vice Principal Sandy Wargo to go over plans to observe classroom instruction at the Boise school. Although Les Bois is a high performing school overall with 88 percent of students proficient in math and 82 percent in reading, subgroup performance needs to improve for the school to move out of "AYP jail."

Whatever your opinion of the federal No Child Left Behind Act and the state accountability plan, they have brought into sharper focus the needs of struggling learners.

Addressing the unique needs of different groups of students creates a challenge for schools, districts, and the state.

The State Department of Education is charged with providing technical assistance to those schools and districts as they strive to ensure all students reach proficiency and meet growth goals.

Pages 4 and 5 of this issue feature a special report on the services provided by the State Department of Education to schools this year.

**Instructional Coaching** - Wendell Elementary School is

one of several schools using "coaches" to assist its efforts to improve student learning.

"It's not like the state looking over our shoulder.

It's like the state coming alongside us to give us a tool to improve student achievement."

**Rod Lowe, Principal**

**Leadership** - Two Treasure Valley principals share their experiences with a new academy designed to help schools in Adequate Yearly Progress difficulty.

**Distinguished Educators** - A team of "Retired Old Guys & Gals" are sharing their expertise with principals.

**Curriculum & Standards** - A tool helps administrators search for disconnects between curriculum and standards.

## Districts urged to review highly qualified status of teachers now

School districts are encouraged to review the highly qualified (HQ) status of veteran teachers by the end of this school year.

The State Department of Education is urging districts to take this step because of notification from the U.S. Department of Education that the tool used to determine the

HQ status of teachers is being eliminated or severely restricted effective July 1, 2006. The tool is called the Highly Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation or HOUSS.

School districts should use the HOUSS rubric to evaluate all veteran teachers of core academic subjects (English lan-

guage arts and reading, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, the arts [art, music, and drama], history, and geography; elementary; and special education) by the end of the 2005-06 school year. If teachers have already completed the HOUSS rubric for the core academic subjects they current-

### For information

Contact Dr. Patty Toney of the State Department of Education 1 (208) 332-6880.

ly teach, they will not have to do it again.

Districts will report the HQ status of teachers to the state beginning in fall 2006.





Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard, center, works with Tom Farley and Pat White to solve a geometry problem at the 2005 Idaho Math Academy.

# Covering all the angles

## Academy puts middle school math center stage

By Rhonda Barton  
for the Northwest Regional  
Educational Laboratory

BOISE - It's the first week of August-prime vacation time-and the thermometer sizzles above 100 degrees in Idaho's capital. Kayakers and rafters throng nearby rivers, and hundreds of tourists spill into the city's historic quarter for a Basque celebration that's held just once every five years. But for LaRue Lambert and more than 100 other middle school mathematics teachers, the late summer trip to Boise is no holiday. For five long days, they'll sit in Boise State University classrooms, soaking up lessons on spatial relationships, coordinate graphing, and the Pythagorean Theorem.

Lambert, who teaches at the combined junior/senior high in the tiny ranching community of Mackay, listens intently as University of Idaho Professor Dave Thomas introduces Geometer's Sketchpad, the most popular geometry computer program in the United States. As Lambert deftly uses her mouse to draw an equilateral triangle within two intersecting circles, Thomas gleefully exclaims, "If you play constructively with this tool for the next six months, you won't be able to restrain yourself from sharing it with your kids!"

### Targeting the Middle Years

Training teachers how to get middle-schoolers engaged and excited about mathematics is the whole point of the Idaho Math Academy. Now in its third year, the academy has reached more than 30 percent of the state's fifth- through eighth-grade teachers, building their skills and their confidence in a subject that some fear. The rigorous five-day summer session targets the hormone-fueled middle school years because that's a make-or-break period.

"More and more, the data tell us that something happens in those years when students begin to think of themselves in terms of what they think they're good at and what they think they're not," State



Superintendent Marilyn Howard informs academy participants. "It's a tough age: no longer the fun time of elementary grades and not yet the memorable years of high school. Middle school needs a special approach."

Middle school is also when more abstract concepts are introduced and math achievement begins to take a precipitous dip. The latest scores on the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in math show students dropping from 90.3 percent proficient and advanced in fourth grade to 69.4 percent in eighth grade. Results of the state's Direct Math Assessment-requiring students to show their work in a timed test-tell a similar story: 61 percent of fourth-graders are proficient and advanced compared to only 46 percent of eighth-graders.

Aiming to boost those numbers, Superintendent Howard's office teamed up with the governor's staff four years ago on a math initiative that would incorporate more effective professional development. Two of the state's largest employers-Hewlett-Packard and Micron-also came to the table. "Obviously they want an educated workforce and employees that are capable of doing the job," points out Susan Harrington, the state math coordinator. "Also, they have children-so even though they're coming at



it as representatives of business, they're parents, too."

A math task force, backed by corporate funding, defined what needed to be done and set about developing materials and designing summer academies held at a different campus each year. Besides focusing on middle school teachers, the task force chose geometry and measurement as the first priorities. "When we were looking at the data, we saw those were the areas in most need of attention," says Harrington.

### Tangrams and Brownies

On day one of the academy, instructors don't waste any time getting to the theoretical heart of the subject: van Hiele levels. In the 1950s, two Dutch math teachers-Pierre van Hiele and Dieke van Hiele-Geldof-observed their

The Idaho Math Academy is a week-long intensive professional development for middle school math teachers.

These photographs from the 2005 session show participants doing hands-on activities they can take back and use in their classrooms.

The 2006 Idaho Math Academy will be July 31 to Aug. 4 at the University of Idaho. The academy is supported with federal funds, which allows about 180 teachers to attend.

mathematical systems and non-Euclidean systems.

As the academy progresses, the teachers are shown how to translate theory into practice. Through open-ended assessment and questioning in class, teachers should aim to identify each student's reasoning skills and then use an array of problems and manipulatives to move the pupil to the next level.

The problem-solving tools can be as specialized as PowerPolygons or as prosaic as dessert. Use a pan of brownies to explore shapes, sizes, and proportions. Convert a two-dimensional sheet of paper into a three-dimensional prism by folding it in half and then eighths. Cut along one radius of a circle and overlap the edges to make a cone whose height changes as the diameter of the base changes. Incorporate tangrams, quilt squares, and pattern blocks into lessons on discovering relationships, developing formulas, and measuring angles. One after another, simple hands-on exercises demonstrate how to help students jump from visualization to analysis and beyond.

The lessons go deeper, though, than simply introducing teachers to a series of entertaining activities. A major consideration is tying instruction to Idaho mathematics standards.

"Everything we do, whether it's a computer lab or activity session, we make sure we're not wasting the teachers' time," says Harrington. "They know that even though these activities may be fun and interesting, they're presenting information that students need. Now teachers have a way to present it that not only will help the students understand the concept, but will also help them do better on those tests that everyone is worried about."

Continued on Page 3





# Work continues on graduation plan

The State Board of Education will continue to meet with education stakeholders to gather feedback and discuss its proposals to increase state graduation requirements.

Laird Stone, State Board of Education President, explained, “The Board is committed to high expectations for all students. Over the next couple of months, the Board will be doing significant public outreach. The Board will continue attending superintendent and school board meetings, and talking to the public about the need to increase rigor.”

Recently, State Board of Education members and staff attended post-legislative briefings conducted by the State Department of Education and meetings hosted by the Idaho School Boards Association.

Stone, who attends superintendent meetings in the Twin Falls area, says meeting with

educational stakeholders is key to creating a dialogue. “Talking about these issues helps every party involved. We hope to minimize misunderstandings by listening, but also communicating the Board’s perspective.”

Stone added, if parents, teachers, and administrators would like a State Board member to attend a meeting, please call Luci Willits at the State Board office at (208) 332-1591.

The Board began its efforts to increase graduation requirements in January 2005 with the Accelerated Learning Taskforce. Idaho has one of the lowest graduation requirements in the nation. More than 35 states have higher requirements. The Board



Laird Stone

hopes to engage students in core classes every year of high school and align high school graduation requirements with post secondary requirements so students are prepared for college and work.

The Board’s proposal to increase graduation requirements included students passing four years of math, three years of science, along with students completing a senior project, taking a college entrance exam paid for by the state, and increased Advanced Placement and dual-credit classes. The state already requires social studies, humanities, health, and English courses for graduation. English is currently the only subject students must take all four years of high school.

The proposal passed the House Education Committee with bi-partisan support, but did not receive funding from the Joint-Finance and Appropria-

Plan status

A proposed rule to change the state’s graduation requirements for high school students was approved during the past legislative session. However, the first year of funding to support the plan was not approved. Because of this, the State Board will withdraw the rule, and develop another proposal.

tions Committee (JFAC).

The Board made a commitment it would not move forward with this rule change without full funding from the Legislature. Therefore, the Board will pass temporary rules at its June Board meeting to remove the new requirements, and will come back to the Legislature in 2007.



# Idaho’s standards revised, renamed

Idaho’s revised standards have received initial approval from the State Board of Education and should be finalized by next year.

The standards were revised after an initial draft was reviewed by educators and the public in December and January.

Also during the process the standards were renamed “content,” instead of “achievement” standards.

“We thank the teachers who served on the review teams and the educators who submitted information during the public comment period,” said Marilyn Howard, Superintendent of Public

Instruction. “We were working on an aggressive timeline to complete this project and it could not have been achieved without support from local districts.”

The revised standards are available by content area and grade level at: <http://www.sde.state.id.us/dept/standards.asp>

It was necessary to revise the standards as part of the process to improve the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT).

Two studies had identified flaws in alignment between the ISAT and the standards.

The first step to improve the ISAT was to create stan-

dards that better identified grade to grade expectations.

In April, the State Department of Education mailed copies of the new standards to every district and school.

In addition, the department surveyed curriculum directors and principals on their progress in implementing the new standards.

The majority of the nearly 300 respondents said their districts were working on reviewing and implementing the new standards for reading/language, math and science.

The department also has created a process to allow the standards to be reviewed and

What’s next

This summer teams of educators will meet to determine new “cut scores” or achievement levels for the ISAT. The new proficiency expectations would apply to the 2007 Spring ISAT.

updated regularly.

Core-subject content standards will be reviewed two years prior to the curricular materials adoption for the subject.

This will allow the revised standards to be used in the evaluation of curricular materials.

## Angles

Continued from Page 2

The activities also support standards from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) that spell out what middle school students should be able to do:

Understand relationships among different two- and three-dimensional objects

Use two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional objects to visualize and solve problems

Examine the congruence, similarity, and symmetry of objects using transformations

According to the NCTM activity book *Navigating Through Geometry* in Grades 6-8, mastering these skills can help middle school students become aware that “from the alignment of the solar system to the structure of an atom, from rocks to crystals to flowers to rings on a snake, from architects to mechanics to artists to musicians, geometry pervades our world.”

### Bringing It Home

Armed with both content and pedagogy-plus a bulging tote bag stuffed with computer programs, AlphaShapes, and MultiLink Cubes-academy participants are starting to apply their new knowledge back in the classroom this fall. “I find that this academy made me more aware of other ways to present materials which might reach some students better than the traditional methods,” says LaRue Lambert. That’s especially useful in a small district where Lambert’s biggest challenge is “bridging



2005 Idaho Math Academy participants work on problems in the computer lab.

“Your task is to ensure balance in your approach: memorization versus application, the usefulness of math against the appreciation for it, the theoretical application against the practicality. That balancing is one way you can help more and more youngsters begin to see themselves as good in math and eager to continue something they’re good at doing.”

Marilyn Howard  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

the gap between those who’ve already reached proficiency in basic skills and those who have not ... teaching to both ends of the spectrum.”

During the coming year, Lambert plans to take advantage of additional PLATO computer training offered by the state. Others at the summer session have signed up for an interactive online course at the University of Idaho that asks teachers to implement activities from the academy and report back on their results-critiquing each other’s lessons. Research suggests that sustaining professional development in this way is important. According to studies by Harold Wenglinsky, “the more extended the professional development, the more it encourages effective classroom practices.”

In the end, though, the academy’s most important lesson might be showing educators that teaching and learning mathematics is a balancing act: one that involves both direct instruction and group activities, memorization and discovery.

As Superintendent Howard exhorted the teachers, “Your task is to ensure balance in your approach-memorization versus application, the usefulness of math against the appreciation for it, the theoretical application against the practicality. That balancing is one way you can help more and more youngsters begin to see themselves as good in math and eager to continue something they’re good at doing.”

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SPECIAL REPORT

# Aiming to improve

## Middle school administrators get help from their PALs

By Jennifer Sandmann  
for News & Reports

Principals leading schools branded with the harsh designation of “failing” are receiving support in diagnosing instructional improvements.

The State Department of Education created the Principal Academy of Leadership, or PAL. It was designed for principals of schools in Adequate Yearly Progress difficulty or “needs improvement” status.

The Department initially designed PALs around the needs of middle schools, because a large number of buildings identified for improvement were middle schools.

Administrators in the PALs program agree to attend statewide and regional training, to allow a team to visit the school and observe teaching in every classroom, and use a tool call Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (See story below.)

Vallivue Middle School principal Rod Lowe in Caldwell is among 29 PAL principals.

“I’m tired of seeing our school’s name in the paper,” Lowe said. “It gives the impression we’re a failing school. We’re not a failing school. We have some students in subgroups that are not proficient and we’re working on that. We know we have areas of improvement.”

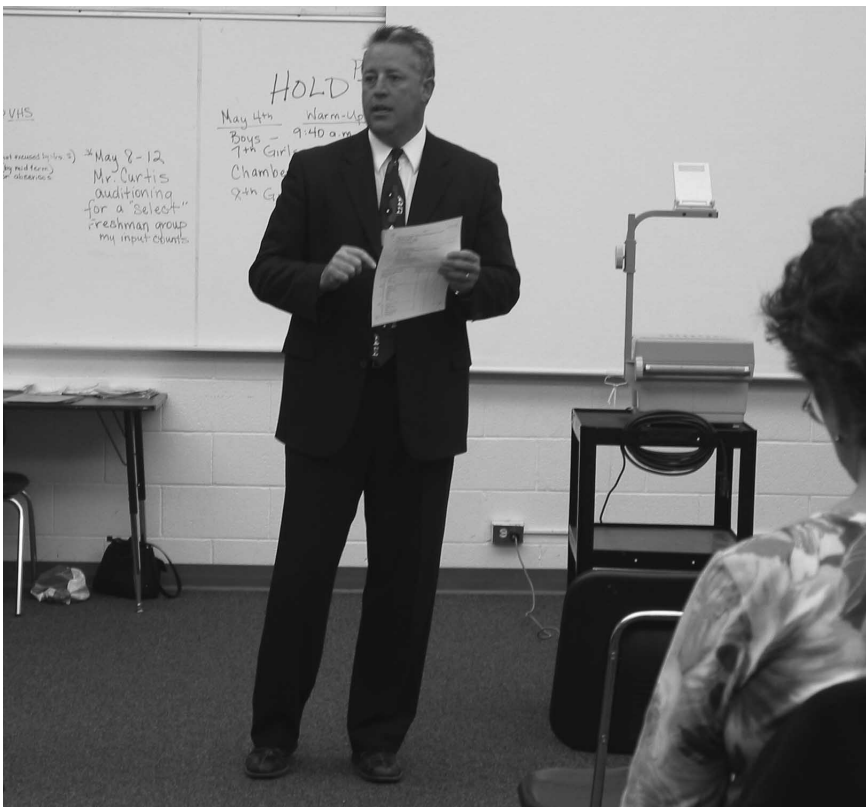
Networking and hearing from other principals dealing with the



Top photo: Jefferson Middle School Principal Randy Schrader, far left, met with a team of Caldwell School District, State Department of Education, and distinguished educators to review math placement at the school. Side photo: Vallivue Middle School Principal Rod Lowe discussed with school staff results from an instructional review. Both principals are participating in the Principal Academy of Leadership offered by the State Department of Education.

same situations and problems has been helpful, Lowe said.

Two meetings involving all PAL principals are held. And principals visit one another’s schools with a team of educators who observe each classroom.



“It’s not like the state looking over our shoulder. It’s like the state coming alongside us to give us a tool to improve student achievement,” Lowe said.

The comprehensive classroom observations, along with detailed faculty surveys in core subjects, are

used to provide schools with data that show what is being taught and how. Staff has welcomed the help, Lowe said.

“What I like about it is that outside perspective that can see things we might not be able to see, just because we live here every day. This process gets us out of our comfort zone. No longer are we an isolated entity,” he said.

Jefferson Middle School in Caldwell is on “alert” status. Principal Randy Schrader said 13 educators visited his school to observe every teacher for a full class period.

Results won’t be ready to show the faculty until the fall, but he sat down with the visiting team the day of the survey for immediate feedback.

Seeing what kind of information would be provided sold him on PAL, he said.

“We haven’t gotten the information back, yet, but I know what the value is going to be. It looks like it’s going to be able to show us, are we focusing on the right thing,” Schrader said.

How is the PAL product different from other data on school administrators’ desks? PAL evaluates classroom instruction, not student performance.

If there is one area where PAL could be tweaked, educators have expressed interest in teachers receiving individual results. But the PAL program is set up to spotlight schoolwide trends.

## Survey tool assists in analyzing curriculum, instruction

By Jennifer Sandmann  
for News & Reports

The State Department of Education is offering schools the opportunity to use a tool to help analyze what is being taught in the classroom.

The tool is called Surveys of Enacted Curriculum. On this survey, teachers report what they covering in their classrooms and how.

Specific practices are described such as how long teachers spend on classroom demonstrations and how often they assign homework.

A comprehensive report of about 100 pages for each subject is produced.

Analyzed are the instructional goings-on in language arts/reading and math classes throughout an entire school, along with a snapshot of classroom demographics and teacher training.

“A lot of time what you perceive

“A lot of time what you perceive you’re doing is not what you’re really doing, and this allows you to pick that out.”

**Chris Hanson,**  
State Department of Education

you’re doing is not what you’re really doing, and this allows you to pick that out,” said Chris Hanson, state reading coordinator for the department’s Bureau of Educational Improvement.

The surveys can take about two hours. Teachers are asked questions designed to determine how well state standards are covered in the classroom and at what depth – recall versus critical thinking. Results can be used to help schools make adjustments in classroom instruction and

pinpoint areas for professional development.

Data are not used for teacher evaluations, Hanson said. Results are scored at the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research at the University of Wisconsin and reported at the school and district level and beyond. Results from individual classrooms are not reported. Surveys are anonymous.

The state is offering the surveys in math and reading/language arts instruction in grades five through eight at schools participating in the SDE’s Principal Academy of Leadership.

Surveys are available for other interested schools. They cost \$12.50 per teacher for online surveys or \$20 per teacher for paper and pencil surveys. Surveys eventually will be available in Idaho for all grades in language arts/reading, math and science.

### What are SEC?

The Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC) are a practical, reliable set of data collection tools being used with teachers of Mathematics, Science and English Language Arts (K-12) to collect and report consistent data on current instructional practices and content being taught in classrooms.

The resulting data provide an objective method for educators to analyze the degree of alignment between current instruction and state standards and assessments.

Source: Council of Chief State School Officers



SPECIAL REPORT

# Aiming to improve

## Distinguished educators serve on School Support Team

By Jennifer Sandmann  
for News & Reports

They prefer “Old Retired Guys & Gals” to “distinguished educators.” No matter the title, these seasoned educators are equipping principals with detailed observations about what is being taught in every classroom.

Are state curriculum standards covered? Are students engaged? Are students challenged?

Normally, it would take months to provide that kind of information to principals, said Mont Hibbard. He is one of nine retirees on the state School Support Team.

The team is central to the State Department of Education’s plan to provide technical assistance to schools striving to measure up to the Adequate Yearly Progress yardstick.

The team includes a mix of active and retired educators drawn from different parts of the state and different areas of expertise. Currently the team includes:

Jody Crockett, Mike Friend  
Mark Gunning, Richard Holloway,  
Mont Hibbard, Janis Hull, Patti O’Dell, Roger Quarles, and Bob West.

The School Support Team observes every classroom in a single day. That includes core classes and electives. “It’s a great opportunity to work with middle school principals. I’ve



Top photo: School Support Team member Janis Hull reviews classroom observation forms with the team members during a school visit. Side photo: Administrators Mike Friend, left, and Bob West (retired) are part of the State Department of Education’s School Support Team.



He is an educator with more than 30 years experience who started as a special education teacher and retired last year as special services director for the Lewiston School District. Hibbard and other School Support

Team members – who include SDE staff and other PAL principals – canvass school buildings observing each teacher for a full class period.

The observations are not teacher evaluations, said Bob West, retired chief SDE deputy. They are designed

**Want to serve?**

Educators interested in participating in School Support Teams may contact Margo Healy of the State Department of Education 1 (208) 332-6901.

to pinpoint schoolwide trends that indicate where resources should be focused for improvement, he said. West began teaching social studies in

1963. He would have been hard-pressed, he said, to live up to today’s demands on teachers.

Teachers are challenged to constantly assess whether students understand the material, West said.

One math teacher he observed provided each student with a small whiteboard. Students worked out math problems and held up their answers. The teacher could ascertain whether each student understood the lesson.

“It’s a lot more engaged, a lot more accountability than anything I’ve experienced,” West said.

## Wendell finds coaching vital

By Jennifer Sandmann  
for News & Reports

It’s built-in professional development.

Idaho elementary schools are hiring reading specialists to serve as instructional “coaches.” Coaching comes with the national push for literacy success in young readers.

Coaches can be used in other subjects such as math and science. Testimonials from schools in other states rate coaching as a key component to boosting student achievement.

Reading coach Lori Johnston at Wendell Elementary School coordinates the school’s reading program. Her role as coach is comprehensive. It involves training teachers in the school’s reading curriculum; coordinating scheduling to allow for classroom intervention services; helping teachers with instructional delivery; helping analyze test scores to diagnose areas for improvement; holding regular teacher meetings by grade level; and being available to help teachers who request it.

A teacher may ask for help with a specific aspect of teaching, such as classroom management, or may seek help devising strategies to reach a student, Johnston said.

Wendell participates in a program called Reading First and has revamped the way it teaches reading. The coaching position was a big part of that.

“Lori was a lot of support, especially when the program was being implemented,” said Debbie Lancaster, a Title I teacher who provides student intervention services.

Wendell changed its intervention approach by pre-teaching, rather than re-teaching. Students reading below

grade level are introduced to new concepts in a small group setting before encountering them in the classroom. This helps them better keep up, which isn’t just good for literacy but for student morale as well.

Coaches are vital to schools, said Karen Osman, principal at Wendell Elementary.

“I think it’s critical for the State Department of Education and our legislators to realize what valuable positions these are,” Osman said. “When teachers are coming out of college they are prepared, but they are not prepared for teaching new reading methodology. If teachers are not well prepared, they can’t do the critical job they need to do.”

Federal grant money from the No Child Left Behind Act has paid for coaches at 30 elementary schools in Idaho that are participating in Reading First. Each school received a total of \$350,000 over three years. That paid for things such as new curriculum, professional development and reading specialists. The money has decreased each year, to allow schools time to absorb program costs. Other elementary schools have used different funding sources to pay for coaches.

Wendell has applied for fourth-year funding, which will be critical to maintaining the coaching position, Osman said.

Reading scores at Wendell have improved, including the scores of students who are economically disadvantaged or who speak English as a second language. The school’s winter reading scores this year produced results rivaling last year’s spring scores, Osman said.

“We’ve made that much growth in half a school year,” she said.



Jim Knight of the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning met with State Department of Education staff in May. The Department is developing a framework to assist districts in implementing coaching programs.

## State eyes coaching framework

One strategy that is helping schools improve and increase student achievement is called “instructional coaching.”

During the past five years, the use of instructional coaching in Idaho has grown and is expected to continue to grow as the State Department of Education promotes the strategy for schools with struggling learners.

Instructional coaches, who are sometimes called collaborators, are being used in schools with Reading First (see related story this page), Title I school improvement, and special education grants. Other districts are using their Title II professional development funds to put in place coaches.

Jim Knight from the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning met with staff from the State Department of Education this spring and described instructional coaches as “cranked up professional developers who are on site every day.”

Coaches are foremost expert educators, but they also are skilled communicators and organizers.

Coaches focus on four areas when assisting teachers: classroom behavior, content knowledge, instruction and formative assessment.

More information is available at: <http://www.instructionalcoach.org/>



# Gooding wins national nutrition award

The Gooding Elementary School has won a top award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for steering students toward healthier food and exercise.

The school is the first in the western states to win the USDA's gold certificate, and it's one of only 59 schools nationwide to earn top honors from the USDA in its HealthierUS School Challenge.

Gooding won because of changes it has made over the last few years. Among other things, the school has implemented a mandatory weekly walking club; it offers fresh fruit and vegetables as snacks in the classroom and the lunchroom; it provides nutrition education as part of the curriculum; and it gives students in grades one through five 150 minutes of recess each week, said the USDA.

All public schools that use nutrition money from the USDA must follow nutrition and food safety guidelines. But Gooding goes far beyond those minimum requirements, said Heidi Martin, a child nutrition specialist with the State Department of Education.

Martin visits the state's public schools as part of her work for the department. She said many schools are changing their health and nutrition guidelines, but Gooding has gone farther than the rest to meet the requirements for the USDA's award.

"We've had a lot of schools try to meet the requirements, but it's hard to find a whole grain that the kids want to eat," said Martin, noting that Gooding's food service director, Anji Baumann, makes whole-grain sugar cookies and whole-wheat rolls.

Baumann has worked as a partner with the physical education teacher to come up with the walking program, Martin said.

## About the award

To qualify for this award, a school must meet a set of criteria which are difficult to achieve. Below are some of the innovative ways that Gooding Elementary met the award criteria:

Offers reimbursable lunches that demonstrate healthy menu planning practices and principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and meets the USDA nutrition standards. This includes offering a whole grain item and low fat milk choice with every meal;

Provides Healthy Choice Bar (full of fruits and vegetables) with all meals;

Participates in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program which provides free fresh fruits and vegetables to students as a snack option;

Provides nutrition education to students through nutrient of the month, taste tests, and as part of the classroom science curriculum;

Provides the students the opportunity for physical activity with a mandatory weekly walking club, 150 minutes of recess per week for grades one through five, and;

Does not have any ala carte or vending machines in the elementary school.

They seem to work as a team; that's what gave them their strength," she said.

Baumann also makes uncooked vegetables interesting, said Martin, recalling the unique snacks she has sampled from the Healthy Choice bar at Gooding, such as raw jicama -- a mild turnip -- with lime, and raw sticks of yam, which look like carrot and which the children enjoy.

"She's really creative," said Martin. "I go there and try



Gooding Elementary School received a national award for its efforts to help children live healthier lives through good nutrition and exercise. In addition to regular physical education as part of the curriculum, the school sponsors a walking club. Earlier this year, the walking club was joined by the Power Panther, the U.S. Department of Agriculture mascot who encourages children and adults to Eat Smart and Play Hard.



things I don't normally try, and I'm a dietitian."

Preparing fresh, nutritious food can cost more in time and money; it's harder to wash and slice fresh vegetables than to open a can. But Baumann said it's worth the extra effort.

"I know our consumption of fruits and vegetables has doubled since we started our healthy choice tables (at lunch) two or three years ago," she

said. The children eat a lot of watermelon and strawberries, and more unusual offerings such as nectarines, tangerines, and persimmons.

"They're good fruit eaters," said Baumann.

To win the USDA award, schools cannot sell candy or other snacks in the lunchroom, and cannot have any soda vending machines -- which most Idaho elementary schools do

not. USDA representatives are going to present the Gold Certificate at the school May 18. Martin is also hoping to win grant money that will enable her to help other schools meet the criteria for the award, perhaps working with Bauman.

"We're going to kind of make a mentor program, and share her applications and recipes," she said.

## BRIEFS

### Department offers plan writing workshops

The State Department of Education will sponsor School Improvement Plan Writing Workshops in August. The workshops are for schools and districts identified for Improvement Year 1, Improvement Year 2 or Corrective Action based on the May 2006 ISAT scores.

Aug. 8-9, Red Lion Hotel, 1800 W. Fairview Ave., Boise

Aug. 14-15, Ameritel Inn, 645 Lindsay Blvd, Idaho Falls

Aug. 16-17, Best Western University Inn, Moscow

For more information contact 1 (208) 332-6973.

### Department offers reading workshops

Several CORE (Consortium on Reading Excellence) trainings will be offered by the State Department of Education.

**CORE Reading Leader Institute, Elementary:** This institute is ideal for K-6 principals and district leaders responsible for literacy programs. June 21-23, AmeriSuites -- 925 N. Milwaukee St., Boise.

**CORE Reading Leader Institute, Secondary:** Ideal for secondary leadership teams responsible for literacy programs in grades 6-12. Team members include principals, department heads, and teacher leaders. District teams include the district secondary administrator. June 20-22, The Hampton Inn & Suites at the Idaho Center -- 5750 E. Franklin Road, Nampa.

**CORE Reading Coach Institute:** This institute is ideal for anyone coaching K-8 teachers in reading, including reading teachers, literacy coaches, reading coordinators, teacher leaders, and some principals. Aug. 8-10, at the AmeriSuites, 925 N. Milwaukee St., Boise.

For more information about registering, contact Bonnie Steiner-Leavitt at the State Department of Education B L S t e i n e r - Leavitt@sde.idaho.gov or call her at 1 (208) 332-6925.

### Preschool staff required to attend training

Staff serving preschool-aged special education children in Idaho Infant Toddler Programs or in school districts are required to attend training on a new data collection method.

Ten "Measuring Early Childhood Outcomes" trainings are scheduled throughout the state on the following dates:

May 19, Boise  
May 22, Idaho Falls  
May 23, Pocatello  
May 30, Lewiston  
May 31, Coeur d'Alene  
June 6, Twin Falls  
June 8, Caldwell

Make up sessions are planned for Aug. 29, Boise and Sept. 6, Moscow.

The trainings are free, but registration is required. For more information contact Cheryl Kary of the State Department of Education, 1 (208) 332-6913.

### State committee to review materials

The State Curricular Materials meets June 19 to 23 in Boise. Main adoption subjects for 2006 include:

- \*Language Arts, part II, categories: English, spelling, composition, grammar, and usage
- \*Communications categories: 1. speech and 2. journalism
- \*Dictionary/Thesaurus
- \*Literature, grades 6-12
- \*Driver Education
- \*Science
- \*Health
- \*Handwriting
- \*Limited English proficiency
- \*Research-based reading
- \*Computer applications

The Annual Curricular Materials Caravan to showcase newly adopted materials will be held in Moscow Oct. 12; Nampa, Oct. 17; Twin Falls, Oct. 18; and Idaho Falls, Oct. 19.

### Group seeks to honor school libraries

Idaho Library Association is seeking nominations for a Idaho School Library Media Program of the Year award. All nominations must be postmarked by May 31. Information is available at: <http://www.idaholibraries.org/awards/index.htm>

### Group seeks to honor school libraries

Edufest, the annual Idaho gifted and talented conference, celebrates its 10th anniversary this July. The event will be July 24-27 at Boise State University. The

theme for the conference is "Creative and Critical Thinking" It will include two special days: July 22 will be Parent's Day and July 24 will feature a School Counselor and Psychologists Institute. More information is available at: <http://www.edufest.org/>

### State committee to review materials

The Better Business Bureau of Southwest Idaho & Eastern Oregon is offering a new scholarship for high school students.

The deadline to apply is Sept. 15.

The Student Ethics Award program recognizes high school students who personify high ethics demonstrated through leadership, community service, overall personal integrity and academic history. Scholarship awards will be presented at the Bureau's Integrity Counts! Banquet on Oct. 18.

Contact Sydney Warner at (208) 342-4649 or at [swarner@boise.bbb.org](mailto:swarner@boise.bbb.org) with any questions.

### State committee to review materials

Several afterschool and prevention programs were recognized for their effectiveness at the Annual Prevention Conference held in Sun Valley in April.

The state also gave the "2006 Shining Star of Prevention Award" winner to Monica McGurkin from the Kendrick School District. This award recognizes an outstanding individual

for making extraordinary efforts to improve the lives of our youth. Principal Loren Gilson of Juliaetta Elementary presented the award.

### Afterschool honorees included:

Plummer-Worley Success Center, Lakeside Elementary School, Plummer Worley School District

Lapwai Afterschool Program, Lapwai School District

G.O.A.L. (Get Out And Learn), Hawthorne Elementary, Boise School District

Extended Kindergarten, Gooding Elementary, Gooding School District

Madison School District Afterschool Program, Madison School District

### Prevention programs honored included:

Creating Self Efficiency & Success for Students in an Alternative School Setting, Lake Pend Oreille Alternative High School, Lake Pend Oreille

Center for Discovery, Prairie Elementary, Cottonwood School District

Big Friendly Groups, Central Elementary, Nampa School District

Bully Busters, Payette Primary, Payette School District

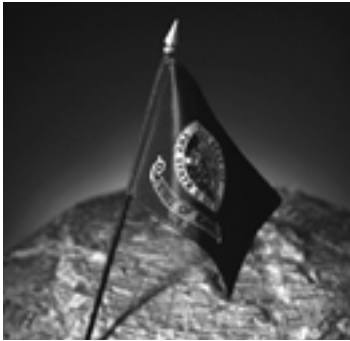
"Good-Touch/Bad-Touch®," Cassia School District

Idaho Drug-Free Youth, Aberdeen High School, Aberdeen School District

Awareness of Better Choices (ABC) Taskforce, Salmon School District

More details on the programs and their successes is available at: [www.sde.state.id.us/safe/](http://www.sde.state.id.us/safe/)





# From Idaho to China

## Teachers connect with state's largest trade partner

**Editor's note:** In late March and early April, Idaho teachers were part of an educational mission to the People's Republic of China headed by Dr. Marilyn Howard, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. One of the participants, Lindy High of the State Department of Education, chronicled the group's visit, the places seen, and the schools and Chinese educators who served as hosts.

**Day 1: Beijing.** After visits to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, the team bussed to the Chinese Ministry of Education for a meeting with Wei Liqing, Director of Special Projects for the Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges, and Zhang Xin, Director of the ministry's Department of Physical Health and Arts Education. Assessing the differences between the U.S. and Chinese school systems, Mr. Wei noted that U.S. students are good at problem-solving, while Chinese students are good at memorizing. Another difference is the fact that in the U.S., students may have several chances to succeed, while in China, "you have only one chance, and it is very hard to get back on the right track. He said educators in the PRC worry about "small old men" – children with too much homework.

**Day 2: Beijing.** The team visited the Great Wall. Later, after walking through a series of dark alleys (hutongs), the team ate at a restaurant serving the traditional Peking Duck dinner.

**Day 3: Xi'an.** At the Museum of Terra Cotta Warriors and Horses – the army of pottery soldiers more than 2,000 years old – the team met with Wu Yongqi, director and curator of the museum, who said the government is strict about the educational and practical qualifications of archaeologists who work at the site. Although researchers know the location of the tomb of the Emperor Qin Shi Huang, 259-210 BC, the first Emperor of All China, its opening will be delayed until the technology needed to protect the contents is improved. The Idaho delegates had special permits that allowed them to walk down to view the soldiers now being reconstructed, a process rather like assembling a jigsaw puzzle.

**Day 4: Xi'an.** The team met with students at the Xi'an University for International Studies, a new campus constructed over 10 months and offering a variety of programs, including preparation of English-speaking tour guides. Wu Yongzhi, deputy dean, said the school needs more English instructors, and passed out cards to encourage the educators in the delegation to return to teach students. The group also visited the Tang Dynasty Art Museum for a discussion of Chinese literature with Chang Ali and a demonstration of Chinese calligraphy and drawing techniques.

**Day 5: Xi'an.** As part of its health education agenda, the team spent the morning at Shaanxi Provincial People's Hospital, a major teaching, research, and medical services provider in the area. The hospital spokesman, noting that the cost of antibiotics is high, said Chinese people are encouraged to use less expensive alternatives, including the hospital's traditional Chinese medicine department. Research at the hospital focuses on tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and Hepatitis B. (Note: On March 1, Beijing issued new stricter regulations governing collection and distribution of blood products in China.)

Before leaving Xi'an, the team visited the 14th century Great Mosque and the Yangling Museum, housing funerary objects from the Han dynasty (206 BC-220AD).



**Top photo:** Wei Liqing, Director of Special Projects for the Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges of China's Ministry of Education, renewed acquaintance with Dr. Marilyn Howard and Dr. Dan Prinzing, the SDE's Coordinator of Civics, Service, Character and International Education.

**Middle photo:** Josh Nielson, a geography teacher at Pocatello's Franklin Middle School, speaks to a student at Xi'an University for International Studies. English is the second language most commonly taught in Chinese elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schools.

Ron Neil and Cynthia Jenkins, both teachers at Boise's Borah High School, prepared mini-lessons for students at Xiang Ming High School in Shanghai, a sister school to Borah. Neil told students that whether they knew it or not, they were already familiar with one of Idaho's products: the French fries served at McDonald's restaurants.



**Day 6: Qingdao.** Qingdao is a sea-coast city where evidence of human settlement has been found dating back 6,000 years. In the late 19th century it was occupied by Germans and later by the Japanese.

Here the team visited the Qingdao International School which has as its motto "Developing a mindful heart" and which focuses on five character traits: vitality (an on-going interest in the world), courage, sensitivity, intelligence, and compassion. Jeff Fischmann, school headmaster, observed that China is really coming back to its "normal" condition – that the last 400 years have been an aberration – and that unlike developing nations, China has a deep well of history and culture to draw on.

**Day 7: Shanghai.** After a morning flight and lunch, the team visited the Yu Yuan Gardens, begun in 1559 and under construction for 19 years. The Luwan Education School District host-

ed the Idaho delegation at an evening dinner, during which both groups discussed plans to improve their international education programs.

The Luwan district, aware that China's economy is developing rapidly and recognizing that more foreigners are moving to the area, intends to develop an international school. Among the district's international education plans are introducing students to world issues and world geography, developing partner relationships with schools in other nations, and inviting foreign teachers to come to their schools to teach.

**Day 8: Shanghai.** The Shanghai Xiang Ming High School is a sister school to Boise's Borah High School. After a formal meeting, during which Dr. Marilyn Howard and the Xiang Ming HS principal exchanged gifts, team members visited a class. The

### About international education

For nearly three years, teams of Idaho educators have been traveling to different nations to as part of an international education initiatives. In addition to learning about other countries and cultures, participants develop lesson plans for teachers.

To access the lesson plans and learn more about the effort, visit: <http://www.sde.state.id.us/dept/international.asp>

The international education effort is led by Dr. Dan Prinzing, the State Department of Education's Coordinator of Civics, Service, Character and International Education.

three teachers from Borah HS – Ron Neil, Cynthia Jenkins, and Rod Wray – showed a video prepared by Borah students and taught brief segments of the class.

The Idaho delegation hosted a luncheon for school officials and representatives of the Luwan Education School District. Among the guests was Dr. Gouli Cao, representing the Idaho-Shanghai Trade Office. In 2004, according to the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor, China was Idaho's 4th largest and fastest growing trade partner, receiving about 11 percent of Idaho's total exports worth \$333 million.

**Day 9: Back to Idaho.** A long flight, with time to sleep, to reflect on what was seen, and to think about the lesson plans that will grow out of the visit with China's educators.



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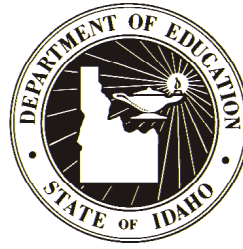
TO:

"News & Reports" (ISSN 1049-2437) is published quarterly by the State Department of Education, Office of Administration, 650 W. State St., Boise ID 83702. Free to all subscribers by the State Department of Education. Periodical class postage paid at Boise, ID.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to "News and Reports," State Department of Education, Office of Administration, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0027. Mail to:

Editor: Allison L. Westfall  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction:  
Dr. Marilyn Howard

"News & Reports" is published in partial fulfillment of federal requirements for the dissemination of information and activities under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.



STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SPRING 2006 VOL. 34, NO. 1, BOISE, ID

# NEWS & REPORTS

www.sde.state.id.us/dept

A message from the state superintendent

## Teachers' skills gain appreciation

My favorite professor of statistics once (tongue in cheek) referred to research as "searching for helpful trends in random data." In other words, we tend to mine the information we receive in a way that supports the conclusions we desire.

I've been searching for helpful trends lately, and I think I've found some. I believe we are seeing the ocean liner of public opinion starting to turn back toward respect for both the profession of teaching and for the skill and knowledge of the experienced teacher.

A review of national news articles on one day, late in April, revealed an overwhelming number of stories expressing concern over the availability of experienced teachers to work with the most needy students in the most needy schools and the challenge of recruiting and retaining teachers of demonstrated quality in hard-to-staff disciplines. Teaching is complicated and the articles stress that experience and skill are needed right along with enthusiasm and good intentions.

The legislature sent signals of support to Idaho's teachers in several ways this year. They approved the first ever public school budget to top \$1 billion and they increased the salary section beyond both the Governor's and my recommendations. For the first time in five years they added money to the pool to increase pay for experienced teachers.

In addition, the legislature asked the State Board of Education to revisit the "high school redesign" plan and return next year. The legislature recognized that a policy change of this magnitude needed to have the kind of discussion the education and local communities have come to expect when adjustments are made that affect their children. All parties expressed concern over unknown and unintended outcomes that



**Dr. Marilyn Howard**  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

might occur, including the danger of an unfunded mandate.

Even the property tax discussion that pushed the legislature to a 93 day session had many legislators arguing against a hasty decision that could undermine the stability of the school budget. They were worried that substitute funding for school support would be difficult to maintain and that local control of schools would be further eroded if the state controlled the purse strings on all the money.

Even the furor over the future competitiveness of our workforce as referenced in Thomas Friedman's book, *The World is Flat: a brief history of the twenty-first century*, is starting to take on a more reasoned tone. The race is not to see who can turn out the most engineers. The future truly belongs to the people who can think and who have imagination and courage. Make no mistake, knowledge is important. But

thinking with that knowledge and applying that knowledge to standard and unique situations are essential. The mental organization that makes both problem-solving and creativity possible comes from complete fluency in basic knowledge AND the ability to take that knowledge to another level. That level is fashioned in classrooms where students question and are questioned, where patterns are revealed or developed, and where comparisons are made and contrasts are discussed.

There is so much skill that goes into the make-up of the excellent teacher. Ask yourself, can my students think, discuss, read, write and listen in the language of the content that I am teaching? Can they explain their knowledge and their work to another person so that person will understand also – even if he or she doesn't speak the language of that discipline? And, does that process add to the student's self-confidence and courage to move forward into deeper thought and more complex challenges?

The talent, commitment, skill and knowledge of administrators and teachers are being noticed and applauded. This issue features the work of teachers, administrators, and SDE personnel as they practice and implement cutting edge strategies intended to improve the efficiency and efficacy of teaching and learning. As the skill of the experienced teacher comes once again into the public eye, a dynamic new environment is revealed; one where collaboration, review, reflection, discussion, mentoring and coaching highlight the qualities that make every teacher better and more teachers great.

We will never be as good as we can be, but our efforts every day to improve what we do will pay untold benefits in the lives of the children we serve and the well-being of our state and nation.

### BRIEFS

#### Mueller wins national technology award

Nancy Mueller of the Coeur d'Alene School District was awarded the National Education Association Award for Technology Leadership.

Mueller teaches fifth-grade at Winton Elementary School.

She received the award at the 11th Annual Salute to Excellence in Education Gala hosted by the NEA, in Washington D.C. this past December.

#### Winton chosen for Fulbright program

Kelly Winton of the Salmon School District was chosen to participate in the Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program.

Winton, from Salmon Alternative School, was selected from more than 2,500 applicants. She traveled to Japan with the program in November 2005.

#### State Board extends contract for I-PLN

At its April meeting, the State Board of Education unanimously extended a contract with PLATO for technical support to school districts operating the Idaho PLATO Learning Network (I-PLN).

The Board created the I-PLN in 2004 to offer individualized courseware for student learning. Teachers use the software to help students with remediation and to challenge students.

The original \$4.9 million contract, utilizing federal funds, included unlimited educational courseware licenses for school districts. More than 110 school districts use I-PLN.

#### Idaho teachers win national math recognition

Two Idaho teachers received the President Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teacher.

Dr. Lawrence Neznanski of Boise's Bishop Kelly High School and Leora White of Nampa's West Middle School received the honor for 7-12 mathematics teaching.

#### State Board elects leaders

State Board of Education members elected new leadership in April. The new president will be Laird Stone from Twin Falls. Other officers include Milford Terrell from Boise as vice-president, and Paul Agidius from Moscow as secretary. Stone replaces Rod Lewis, who served as president for two years.

#### Districts required to mark Constitution Day

Educational institutions receiving federal funds are required to offer an educational program on the Constitution on Constitution Day, Sept. 17. Because Sept. 17 falls on a Sunday in 2006, school districts may offer programs on Sept. 18.

The State Department of Education has more information to assist districts in

meeting this requirement on its website at: [www.sde.state.id.us/dept/docs/civic/ConstitutionDay.pdf](http://www.sde.state.id.us/dept/docs/civic/ConstitutionDay.pdf)

#### State testing schedule for 2006-07 announced

The state testing dates for the 2006-07 school year are as follows:

**Idaho Reading Indicator** (Grades K-3) -- September 2006, January 2007, and April 15 to May 15, 2007

**Idaho Standards Achievement Tests** (Grades 2-10) -- Fall: Sept. 18 to Oct. 27 and Spring: April 9 – May 18, 2007

**Direct Mathematics Assessment** (Grades 4, 6, 8) Nov. 28

**Direct Writing Assessment** (Grades 5, 7, 9) Nov. 29

#### Environmental group honors teachers

The Idaho Environmental Education Association (IdEEA) has selected three Idaho teachers as "Environmental Educators of the Year."

The awardees for 2005 are:

Molly Pannkuk, 6th grade teacher, Lena Whitmore Elementary, Moscow.

K.C. Jones, science teacher, Skyline High School, Idaho Falls.

Alana Jensen; education and communications task manager; Idaho National Laboratory Environmental Surveillance, Education and Research Program.

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